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Weekly Payroll Jobs

Payroll job estimates, sourced from Single Touch Payroll (STP) data

Reference period Week ending 17 February 2024

Released 14/03/2024

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Key statistics

In the week ending 17 February 2024, payroll jobs:

- increased by 2.0% in the month since 20 January 2024
- increased by 1.9% in the year since 18 February 2023

Update of employer characteristics

The source of employer characteristics - industry, employment size and sector - has been updated in this release from the week ending 30 December 2023 resulting in revisions to all industry, employment size and sector indexes from this point forward.

This third periodic update has refreshed employer characteristics as well as reduced the number of payroll jobs with 'unknown' employment characteristics improving the quality of impacted indexes. The magnitude of revisions in this update is larger than the last update due to a longer time period between updates and component indexes are impacted differently. For more information, see the [Update of employer characteristics \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#update-of-employer-characteristics\)](#) section of the Methodology.

The date at which employer characteristics are updated, called 'transition points', can be visible in the levels of

some indexes. Users should always exercise caution when comparing week-on-week changes and index levels across transitions points - the latest being the week ending 30 December 2023.

The ABS recommends that analyses of previously published estimates be refreshed with the data from this release.

Seasonality and reporting variability

The movements in payroll jobs estimates at the end and start of the calendar year include large seasonal changes in the labour market - further described in a historical [seasonality spotlight](https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/seasonality-spotlight-2021-year-end#seasonality) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/seasonality-spotlight-2021-year-end#seasonality>) article.

Some businesses have reduced activity in late December and early January which may lead to a higher degree of reporting variability over this period. This can result in higher than usual levels of revision for payroll jobs for this period when more normal reporting resumes. Further information is available in the [Data variability and revisions](#) ([/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#data-variability-and-revisions](#)) section of the Methodology.

Factors affecting interpretation

These estimates are not seasonally adjusted and seasonality can affect the interpretation of change, particularly between sub-annual periods. While annual comparisons can assist in understanding underlying change, they are less useful when events such as public holidays or pandemic lockdowns don't occur in the same week in both years.

In addition, when comparing the change between any two periods, interpretation can be complicated by variations in payroll jobs composition. Payroll job indexes are compiled from over 11 million jobs and variations in the types of jobs reported can result in compositional change (which is not quantified). For example, each payroll job in each week:

- is counted in the same way regardless of job status (full-time, part-time or casual), hence variations in demand for casual staff can influence week-on-week change.
- represents an individual in every paid job reported via STP, hence jobholders working multiple jobs are counted more than once. While multiple jobholders account for less than 10% of all payroll jobs, they can increase the rate of change seen week-to-week (in some industries) in circumstances where they are unable to work in any of their jobs (e.g. due to illness) and are not paid when absent.

Compositional change can also differ at the industry or state and territory level, particularly when there are localised labour market issues.

Alternative period comparisons

The combination of seasonal effects and differences in composition can increase the volatility of week-on-week or month-on-month changes in these estimates. For these reasons, the ABS recommends using comparisons of the current month to the same month in the previous year, or 3 months prior, to understand any trends in the payroll jobs estimates presented. These comparisons will likely reduce the impact of seasonal factors and compositional change, making trends easier to identify.

Revisions

This release sees higher than usual revisions between early October to mid-November 2023, as the 16 week imputation retention threshold passes through this period. These revisions mostly reflect the removal of previously imputed records, with the receipt of more complete data. Users should exercise caution when referring to estimates around this period.

Change periods

This release presents percentage change between the weeks ending 17 February 2024 and:

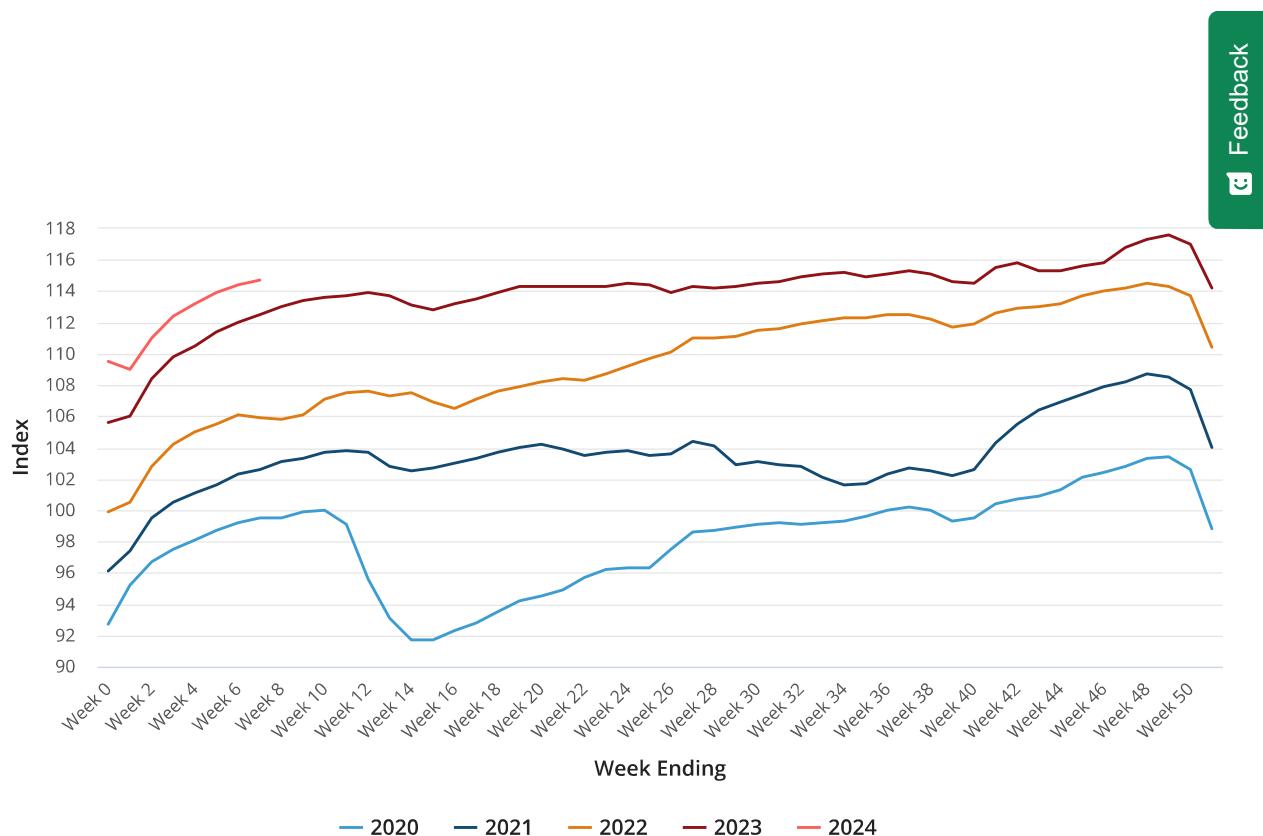
- 03 February 2024, for fortnight
- 20 January 2024, for month
- 18 February 2023, for year

This differs for employment size estimates which are a month lagged.

National

In the month to 17 February 2024, payroll jobs increased by 2.0%, compared to a decrease of 1.6% in the previous month.

Payroll jobs, comparison across years (a)(b)(c)



a. Indexed to the week ending 14 March 2020 (week 10 in 2020).

b. Week 0 represents the weeks ending 4 January 2020, 2 January 2021, 1 January 2022, 31 December 2022 and 30 December 2023. Week 7 represents the weeks ending 22 February 2020, 20 February 2021, 19 February 2022, 18 February 2023 and 17 February 2024.

c. Around the change in financial years estimates see a greater variation in business payroll reporting. For more information, see the [Data variability and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#data-variability-and-revisions\)](#) section.

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Estimates of change throughout this release are calculated using un-rounded index values. They may be different from, but are more accurate than, movements obtained from the rounded index values.

State and territory

All geographical areas in this release represent the residential address of the jobholder.

In the month to 17 February 2024, the largest changes in payroll jobs were:

- Northern Territory, up 3.1%
- Victoria, up 2.5%

Percentage change in payroll jobs, by state and territory

	Fortnight (%)	Month (%)	Year (%)
New South Wales	0.8	2.1	1.3
Victoria	0.8	2.5	1.6
Queensland	0.6	1.5	1.9
South Australia	0.6	2.3	3.3
Western Australia	0.7	1.6	3.4
Tasmania	0.7	1.4	
Northern Territory	1.1	3.1	
Australian Capital Territory	0.9	1.9	
Australia	0.7	2.0	

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Monthly percentage change in payroll jobs, by state and territory

Loading map...

Sex and age group

As at 17 February 2024, the proportion of jobholders with unknown sex has risen to 8.7%. These jobholders are not evenly distributed, hence this proportion differs across detailed indexes which include sex, and can affect comparisons over time. Indexes of persons aged 15-19 years old by sex are particularly impacted by rising proportions of unknown sex, hence the withdrawal of indexes of persons aged 15-19 years old by sex in the release of 11 May 2023. See the historical [Methods review \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-and-wages-australia-methodology/week-ending-12-february-2022#methods-review\)](#) section on the Update of jobholder characteristics for more information.

In the month to 17 February 2024, the largest changes in payroll jobs were:

- worked by females, up 2.7%
- worked by persons aged 70 and over, up 6.2%

Percentage change in payroll jobs, by sex and age group (a)

		Fortnight (%)	Month (%)	Year (%)
Sex	Males	0.3	1.0	-2.5
	Females	1.0	2.7	-0.5
Age group (years)	15-19	1.3	3.0	-5.1
	20-29	1.0	2.3	2.4
	30-39	0.7	1.7	2.8
	40-49	0.6	1.9	2.4
	50-59	0.4	1.6	1.0
	60-69	0.6	2.7	4.3
	70 and over	1.8	6.2	7.6
All persons		0.7	2.0	1.9

a. Persons with 'unknown' sex and age are only included in the calculation of All persons indexes. For more information, see Inclusion of unknown characteristics in [How data are processed \(https://abs.gov.au/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-February-2024#how-data-are-processed\)](#).

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5 year age groups

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by 5 year age groups by sex are presented as index values in Table 8 of the Data downloads.

Industry

In the month to 17 February 2024, the largest changes in payroll jobs were:

- Education and training, up 11.9%
- Arts and recreation services, up 4.2%

Percentage change in payroll jobs, by industry (a) (b)

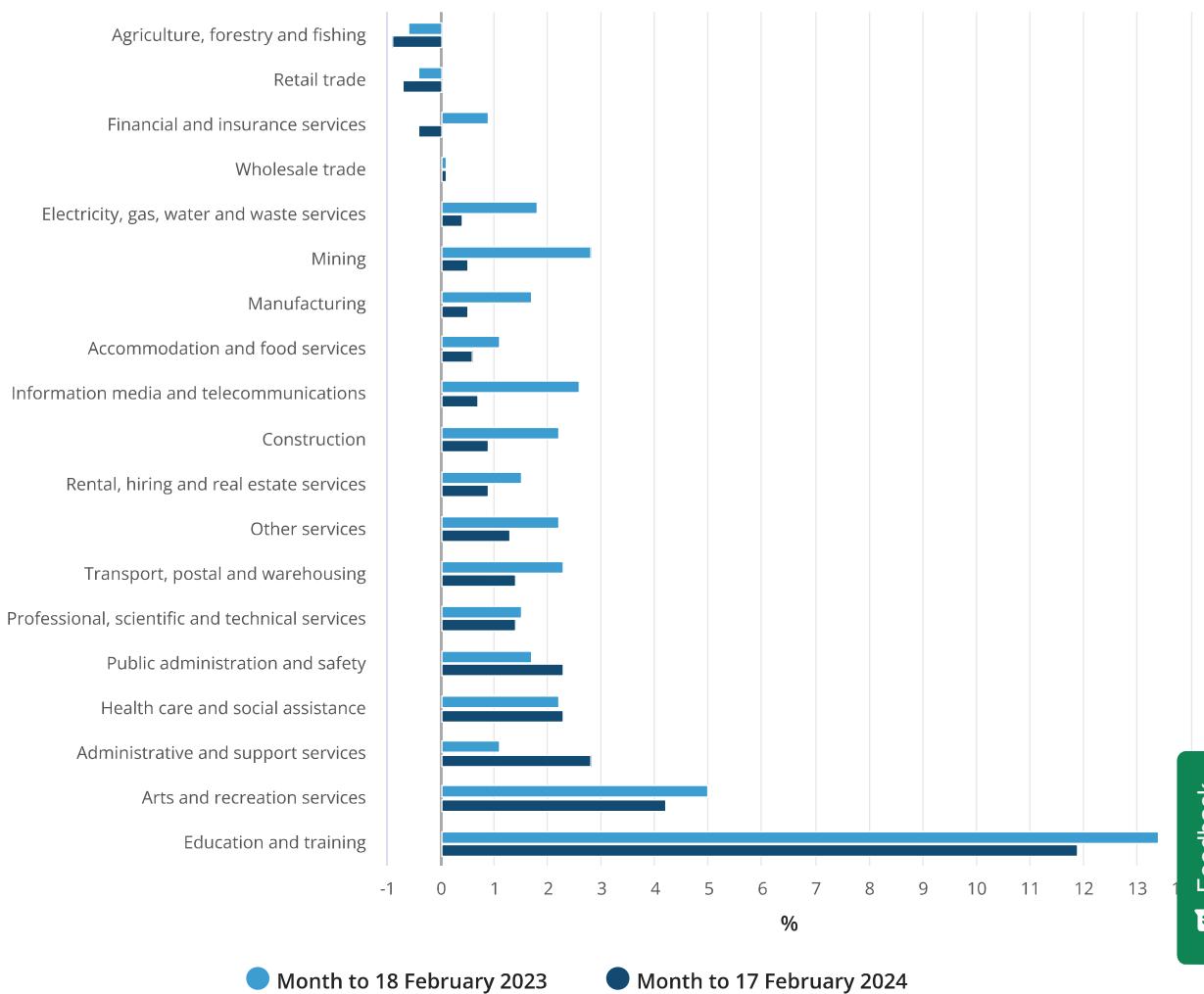
	Fortnight (%)	Month (%)	Year (%)
Agriculture, forestry and fishing	-0.7	-0.9	-1.0
Mining	0.4	0.5	7.3
Manufacturing	0.1	0.5	2.0
Electricity, gas, water and waste services	0.0	0.4	7.6
Construction	0.0	0.9	2.0
Wholesale trade	0.4	0.1	2.4
Retail trade	-0.8	-0.7	2.0
Accommodation and food services	0.1	0.6	-1.1
Transport, postal and warehousing	0.2	1.4	1.5

	Fortnight (%)	Month (%)	Year (%)
Information media and telecommunications	1.2	0.7	-1.4
Financial and insurance services	-0.1	-0.4	1.5
Rental, hiring and real estate services	0.5	0.9	1.4
Professional, scientific and technical services	1.0	1.4	2.3
Administrative and support services	1.0	2.8	3.2
Public administration and safety	1.0	2.3	5.2
Education and training	4.5	11.9	5.9
Health care and social assistance	0.8	2.3	9.3
Arts and recreation services	1.6	4.2	4.0
Other services	0.1	1.3	1.1
All industries	0.7	2.0	1.9

a. Some industries experience pronounced seasonality in payroll jobs. For more information, see Seasonality in [Data variability and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#data-variability-and-revisions\)](#).

b. Jobs with 'unknown' industry are only included in the calculation of all industry indexes. For more information, see Inclusion of unknown characteristics in [How data are processed \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#how-data-are-processed\)](#).

Percentage change in payroll jobs by industry (a)



a. Industries ranked by percentage change in the latest month.

Industry subdivision

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by industry subdivision are presented as index values in Table 6 of the Data downloads. For more information on the industry classifications used in this release, see the [Glossary](#) ([/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#glossary](#)).

Private sector industry

Time series estimates of payroll jobs by private sector for selected industry divisions are presented as index values in Table 9 of the Data downloads. More information on the sector classification can be found in [Updating characteristics variables](#) in [How data are processed](#) ([/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#how-data-are-processed](#)) and the [Glossary](#) ([/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#glossary](#)).

Industry employment guide

To learn more about the different labour measures available, their purpose and how to use them, see our [Industry](#)

Employment size

The ABS advises caution in using the most recent periods in payroll jobs by employment size indexes, which are subject to higher than usual revisions over a longer period - particularly for small employers. These indexes are more heavily influenced by changes in reporting behaviour and reporting obligations than other indexes, affecting the interpretation of underlying change in labour market conditions. To provide more stability at the end point of these series, a month lag in the reference week is in place.

This release presents percentage change between the weeks ending 20 January 2024 and:

- 06 January 2024, for fortnight
- 23 December 2023, for month
- 21 January 2023, for year

In the month to 20 January 2024, the largest changes in payroll jobs were:

- 0-19 employees, down 17.8%

Percentage change in payroll jobs by employment size, for the week ending 20 January 2024

(a) (b)

	Fortnight (%)	Month (%)	Year (%)
0-19 employees	5.0	-17.8	-
20-199 employees	4.4	9.3	-
200 employees and over	1.8	2.9	-
All businesses	3.2	-1.6	-

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- Records with 'unknown' employment size are only included in the calculation of All businesses indexes. For more information, see [Revisions in sub-populations in Data variability and revisions \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#data-variability-and-revisions\)](#).
- The monthly and annual changes should be used with caution given they cross the 'transition point' of the update to employer characteristics. For more information, see the [Update of employer characteristics \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#update-of-employer-characteristics\)](#) section of the Methodology.

Distribution of characteristics

To aid in the interpretability of payroll job estimates, the following data download contains selected distributions of jobholder and employer characteristics by state and territory.

Records with 'unknown' characteristics have been excluded from the calculation of proportions. For more information on the source, impact and proportion of unknowns, see the Updating characteristic variables and Inclusion of unknown characteristics sections of [How data are processed \(/methodologies/weekly-payroll-jobs-methodology/week-ending-17-february-2024#how-data-are-processed\)](#).

Table 20: Payroll jobs - characteristics distributions

Contains selected distributions of jobholder and employer characteristics.

 [Download XLSX](#)

[263.82 KB]

Data downloads

Indexes of persons aged 15-19 years old by sex have been withdrawn (since the 11 May 2023 release) and appear as NA (not available) in Tables 4 and 8.

Table 4: Payroll jobs indexes

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[3.49 MB]

Table 6: Industry subdivision - Payroll jobs indexes

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[143.44 KB]

Table 7: Employer characteristics - Payroll jobs index

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[70.7 KB]

Table 8: Jobholder characteristics - Payroll jobs index

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[83.46 KB]

Table 9: Sector - Payroll jobs index

[↓ Download XLSX](#)

[61.09 KB]

All data cubes

[↓ Download ZIP](#)

[2.62 MB]

Previous articles

Previously published articles and information of interest are linked below:

- [Characteristics spotlight: 2022](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/characteristics-spotlight-2022>) (August 2022)
- [Characteristics spotlight: 2021](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/distribution-jobholder-and-employer-characteristics>) (May 2021)
- [Seasonality spotlight: 2022 to 2023 year end](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/spotlight-seasonality-payroll-jobs-and-wages-paid-2022-year-end>) (April 2023)
- [Seasonality spotlight: 2021 to 2022 year end](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/seasonality-spotlight-2021-year-end>) (February 2022)
- [Seasonality spotlight: 2020 to 2021 year end](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/year-end-data-variability>) (February 2021)
- [A year of COVID-19 through payroll jobs and wages statistics](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/year-covid-19-through-payroll-jobs-and-wages-statistics>) (March 2021)
- [Regional spotlight: New South Wales and Queensland](#) (<https://www.abs.gov.au/articles/regional-spotlight-new-south-wales-and-queensland>) (April 2022)

Previous catalogue number

This release previously used catalogue number 6160.0.55.001.

Methodology

[Weekly Payroll Jobs methodology, Week ending 17 February 2024](#)

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